Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

# Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 05775 01 OF 02 302034Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
----------048099 302038Z /41
Z 302024Z MAR 78 ZFF 4
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 7187

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 05775

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS PRESIDENT'S PARTY FOR SECRETARY VANCE
FROM CHRISTOPHER

DEPARTMENT FOR TARNOFF

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM NATO MNUC GW OVIP (CHRISTOPHER, WARREN)
SUBJECT: ERW: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S BRIEFING OF GENSCHER

1. DURING THE LAST HALF HOUR OF A TWO AND ONE-HALF HOUR SESSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER LATE TODAY, I ASKED THAT OTHER PARTICIPANTS BE EXCUSED AND THEN I ADDRESSED ERW QUESTION. EXPLAINING THAT I WOULD BE SEEING THE CHANCELLOR TOMORROW AT THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT, I TOLD HIM I HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO FORE-SHADOW TOMORROW'S PRESENTATION. HIGHEST CONFIDENTIALITY WAS STRESSED.

2. I EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT HAS BEEN ENGAGED CONTINUOUSLY IN INTENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION AND ARGUMENTS RELATING TO ERW. HE HAS DONE SO IN THE CONTEXT THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL DECISION ON PRODUCTION IS A US DECISION, AND THUS ULTIMATELY HIS RESPONSIBILITY. AS A RESULT OF HIS EVALUATION, THE PRESIDENT IS STRONGLY LEANING TO A DECISION
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 05775 01 OF 02 302034Z

AGAINST THE PRODUCTION OF ERW.

3. WHILE ANY DECISION OF THIS HISTORIC MAGNITUDE INVOLVES MANY FACTORS, THE FOLLOWING FACTORS HAVE SIGNIFICANCE:

(A) CONSIDERING THE EXPRESSED VIEWS OF SEVERAL

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

NATO MEMBERS, A DECISION TO PRODUCE HAS A HIGH POTENTIAL FOR BEING A DIVISIVE INFLUENCE IN THE ALLIANCE. THE VIEWS OF THOSE OPPOSED ARE KNOWN, THOUGH WE HAVE NO INTENTION TO HOLD THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECISION.

(B) THE WIDE DIVISION IN PUBLIC OPINION IN THE FREE WORLD ON THE ERW HAD THE POTENTIAL TO CREATE A SITUATION THAT, IF THE US COMMENCED PRODUCTION, IT MIGHT BE MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT THROUGHOUT NATO AND ELSEWHERE FOR ESSENTIAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS WHICH ARE OR SHOULD NOT BE CONTROVERSIAL.

(C) ERW IS NOT A PANACEA WHICH WOULD OVERNIGHT SOLVE OR SUBSTANTIALLY DIMINISH OUR SECURITY PROBLEMS.

(D) THE US AND NATO CAN MEET OUR SECURITY REQUIREMENTS THROUGH MODERNIZATION OF CONVENTIONAL AND THEATER NUCLEAR PROGRAMS. ERW IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO OUR SECURITY.

(E) THE TRADE-OFF APPROACH WAS CONTROVERSIAL AND SEEMED UNLIKELY ULTIMATELY TO BE PRODUCTIVE.

4. EMPHASIZING APPRECIATION FOR FRG CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT DURING THIS DIFFICULT PROCESS, I SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION WOULD PROBABLY BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I STRESSED WE WOULD VALUE HIS ADVICE IN

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CONNECTION WITH THE ENTIRE SITUATION ESPECIALLY THE MEANS OF HANDLING THE DECISION AND ANNOUNCEMENT.

5. GENSCHER DID NOT CHALLENGE DIRECTION PRESIDENT IS LEANING. HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE THAT WHEN ANNOUNCED, DECISION BE DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN MADE BY THE US AND THAT THERE BE "NO EFFORT TO PASS THE BUCK TO THE ALLIANCE."

6. QUIZICALLY, GENSCHER ASKED WHAT HAD CAUSED THE PRESIDENT TO COME TO A NEGATIVE JUDGMENT. SAYING THAT IT WAS ULTIMATELY A PERSONAL DECISION OF HIGHEST ORDER, I RESTATED FACTORS OUTLINED ABOVE, SENSING THAT THE REFERENCE TO THE FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN THE FREE WORLD PRODUCED A STRONGER RESONANCE THAN THE OTHERS. I TOOK THIS OCCASION TO SAY THAT SOVIET PROPAGANDA EFFORT HAD PLAYED NO PART, EXCEPT PERHAPS TO PUSH PRESIDENT IN

SECRET

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 05775 02 OF 02 302031Z
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 7188

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 05775

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OPPOSITE DIRECTION OF HIS PRESENT STRONG LEANING. GENSCHER STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF MAKING THIS CLEAR TO PUBLIC.

7. GENSCHER ASKED WHAT OTHER NATIONS HAD BEEN CONSULTED, AND I REFERRED TO CALLAGHAN CONVERSATIONS WHEN HE WAS IN US, BUT SAID THERE WERE NONE OTHER TO MY KNOWLEDGE. I REFERRED TO ANTICIPATED DAVID OWEN MEETING SATURDAY MORNING, AND SUBSEQUENT NEED TO BRIEF NATO ALLIES AND OTHERS, INCLUDING CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS.

8. GENSCHER SAID HE WOULD CALL SCHMIDT PRIOR TO MY MEETING WITH HIM TOMORROW, AND SCHMIDT WOULD PASS ON THEIR JOINT COMMENTS OR ADVICE AT THAT TIME. EMPHASIZING THAT MY FORESHADOWING TO HIM CERTAINLY MEANT NO DISCOURTESY TO CHANCELLOR, GENSCHER SAID THAT WAS NO PROBLEM AT ALL. THEY HAD TALKED BEFORE MY MEETING AND WOULD TALK AGAIN.

9. MY NET IMPRESSION IS THAT GENSCHER IS CONCERNED, WOULD HAVE DECIDED OTHERWISE, BUT ACCEPTS ULTIMATE DECISION IN GOOD GRACE. HE WANTS TO BE SUPPORTIVE WHEREVER HE CAN.

10. I WILL LEAVE HERE AT 9:00 A.M. TOMORROW (FRIDAY). PLEASE ADVISE IF YOU OR PRESIDENT WANT CHANGES IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 05775 02 OF 02 302031Z

APPROACH DESCRIBED ABOVE.
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Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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**Executive Order:** X1
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**Review Markings:**
Sheryl P. Walter
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20 Mar 2014
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014